

## TODAY'S SUGGESTED SCHEDULE

### TODAY'S BIBLE STORY

#### Big Picture

Joseph Forgives His Brothers  
Genesis 41–45

### TODAY'S KEY QUESTION

When has something turned  
out better than you expected?

### HOST SUPPLIES

- Host

### STORY SUPPLIES

Bible  
Kid volunteers  
Prop box with the  
following props:  
▫ Pharaoh costume  
Pillow  
Paper healthy cows  
(optional: seven, on  
sticks)  
Paper small cows  
(optional: seven, on  
sticks)  
Fancy cup / chalice for  
the cupbearer  
Simple robe for Joseph  
Fancy royal robe for  
Joseph  
10-12 bags of grain  
(pillow cases or burlap  
bags with stuffing. Grain  
will not be used)  
Silver cup

### PRELUDE: Setting the tone for the experience

See the **Getting Ready** pages at the end of this document for a detailed description of what you'll need for today. In the **Prelude** folder of your curriculum, you'll find a variety of other resources to help you prepare.

### SMALL GROUP

**15**  
MIN

#### SOCIAL: Providing time for fun interaction

Just for Fun  
Opening Activity

### LARGE GROUP

**35**  
MIN

#### STORY: Communicating God's truth in engaging ways WORSHIP: Inviting people to respond to God

Welcome/Opener  
Worship ("Better Than the Best" from *Turn It Up*, "The Power" from *Everything to Me*, and "Good Always" from *This Love*)  
Bible Story (Communicator Script)  
Key Question  
Prayer

### SMALL GROUP

**25**  
MIN

#### GROUPS: Creating a safe place to connect

Application Activity: Take a Snapshot  
Bible Story Review: Bible Story Review and Discussion Questions  
Memory Verse Activity: Verses to Take with You  
Prayer Activity: Make it Personal with Prayer

### HOME: Prompting action beyond the experience

Parent Cue Card (print or email)  
Devotional for Kids  
Parent Cue App

# CLIFFHANGER

THE STORY  
ISN'T OVER

WEEK  
**TWO**  
OCTOBER 2022

LARGE GROUP  
**PRETEEN**

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

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HOME

25 MINUTES

10 MINUTES

## TODAY'S BIBLE STORY

### Big Picture

Joseph Forgives His Brothers  
Genesis 41–45

## TODAY'S KEY QUESTION

When has something turned out better than you expected?

## TODAY'S BOTTOM LINE

Hold on because there's a bigger story.

## MONTHLY MEMORY VERSE

"Let us not become tired of doing good. At the right time we will gather a crop if we don't give up."  
Galatians 6:9, NIV

## MONTHLY VIRTUE

Grit—Refusing to give up when life gets hard

## BASIC TRUTH

I can trust God no matter what.

## LARGE GROUP

ENGAGE KIDS' HEARTS THROUGH A DYNAMIC AND INTERACTIVE BIBLE STORY, WORSHIP, AND PRAYER EXPERIENCE IN A LARGE GROUP SETTING.

**AUDIO: PLAY HIGH-ENERGY MUSIC AS STUDENTS ENTER.**

**SLIDE: THEME**

**OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME LOOP**

## WORSHIP

*Worship Leaders enter*

**WORSHIP LEADER:**

**AUDIO:**

**AUDIO:**

*Host enters . . .*

**OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): COUNTDOWN (30- OR 60-SECOND VERSION)**

**OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME**

## WELCOME

*Host has lots of energy as he or she welcomes everyone to [Name of Environment]. Host is relatable and inviting. Host can talk about something that happened culturally throughout the week like a big sports game, movie opening, a viral video on YouTube, etc. Host tells them how excited he or she is that they're there and briefly runs through what they can expect. This is especially helpful for first-time guests to make them feel like they know what's happening.*

## OPENER

**HOST:** "Hey, everyone! So good to see you here today! I am excited because we have another great day together! Last week, we talked about how life can be quite the cliffhanger. Like mountain climbers dangling on a huge rock face, we're not always sure we can make it through, but when trust God and lean into God's strength, we can find the grit we need to make it through! Let's start with another game that will test what we know about cliffhanging adventures! When you're out on the mountain, it's important to know what gear you have available to face whatever comes your way. So let's play Know Your Gear.

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## SLIDE: KNOW YOUR GEAR

"Here's how it works: we'll play this side of the room (*indicate the left side*) vs. that side of the room (*indicate the right side*)! Here's how you play: on the screen, an image of some essential adventure gear will appear, but that image will be incredibly zoomed in! We'll start with the left side of the room. If you can guess it, you get five points. If you can't get it, the right side of the room will get a chance to steal. If they get it, five points to them! If nobody guesses it on the first picture, the next picture zooms out a bit for three points. If nobody guesses it STILL, the picture zooms out one more time for one point before revealing the answer. Let's see how you all do with identifying these images! Let's play: Left side of the room, you're up!

**HOST:** play the game going back and forth with each team. Appoint a small group leader on each team to keep track of the point totals. Comment on the different guesses.

*Tech Note: Show the following slides on the Host's lead. When a team guesses correctly, show the Answer slide.*

SLIDE: CLIMBING ROPE 1A

SLIDE: CLIMBING ROPE 1B

SLIDE: CLIMBING ROPE 1C

SLIDE: CLIMBING ROPE 1D

SLIDE: CARABINER 2A

SLIDE: CARABINER 2B

SLIDE: CARABINER 2C

SLIDE: CARABINER 2D

SLIDE: TREKKING POLES 3A

SLIDE: TREKKING POLES 3B

SLIDE: TREKKING POLES 3C

SLIDE: TREKKING POLES 3D

SLIDE: WATER BOTTLE 4A

SLIDE: WATER BOTTLE 4B

SLIDE: WATER BOTTLE 4C

SLIDE: WATER BOTTLE 4D

SLIDE: SWISS ARMY KNIFE 5A

SLIDE: SWISS ARMY KNIFE 5B

SLIDE: SWISS ARMY KNIFE 5C

SLIDE: SWISS ARMY KNIFE 5D

"(After game) Great job guessing those images! But the winning team is [insert winning side of the room here]! Those were challenging! Now, let's stand together and worship our amazing God!"

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## COMMUNICATOR SCRIPT (STORY)

SLIDE: THEME BACKGROUND

*Communicator enters as Worship Leaders exit.*

### INTRODUCTION

**COMMUNICATOR:** “Well, hello, my friends! So glad to see you all here today! I am having a great time with you all this month, and we have SO much more in store. You know last week, we talked about needing grit to help us get through some hard things. So I wanted to ask you a question. Have you ever braced yourself for the worst, like you were almost positive a certain situation was going to be an absolute train wreck? You planned for the worst, but then it actually went better than you expected? Maybe you were called down to the principal’s office, but . . . she gave you an award? Or you went to your game thinking your team was going to get crushed, but . . . you won? Who has a story? (Take a few stories as you have time.) Well, let me tell you about this one time . . .

*Tell a personal story similar to the one below of a time where something went way better than you expected it to go (a game, presentation, a hard conversation, etc.) Optional: turn the following story into a hypothetical situation.*

*Several years ago now, my good friend Eddie invited me to be his partner for an adventure race: mountain biking, high ropes, hiking, and map orienteering. It’d be a grueling day of trying to find different locations over 30 square miles to fill our card with stamps. He’d done several before, but this would be my first time doing anything like this. I was good on my feet, but my mountain bike was a discount-store special. I wasn’t quite sure that it’d be up for the challenge. But we trained for months, riding up and down hills to build stamina and hiking the woods to learn how to use the compass with the orienteering maps. I was exhausted, and the bike had seen better days, but it did alright throughout the training. The true test would be on race day. I wasn’t too optimistic, and at this point I just didn’t want to come in last place or pass out on the course. Sure enough, race day came . . . we tried our hardest and never gave up. We only had to fix a bike tire once. And sure enough . . . I didn’t pass out. AND we didn’t come in last place! And most of all, we had fun. I’m so glad we raced and didn’t give up.*

### TENSION

**COMMUNICATOR:** “Adventure races, difficult tests, going up against the best teams. It’s one thing to look back and see how everything turned out great. But life happens as we’re living it, and we never, ever get to see the whole story while it’s happening. Which brings up a big question: how can we hang on and keep going when we can never, ever know how what we’re going through will turn out? How can grit show up in those moments? And more than that, how can we trust God when we don’t really know how God will show up to help? That’s an important question for us to answer. Thankfully, God inspired the writers of the Bible to include some amazing stories of God’s faithfulness to help us trust God no matter what when we face confusing or difficult moments in our own life. Let’s check on out now.

### TRUTH

**COMMUNICATOR:** “In fact, we started this guy’s story last week. Anyone remember his name? (Pause for responses.) Yes, Joseph! When we left Joseph, he was in prison in Egypt. His jealous brothers had originally sold him to travel on their way to sell people into slavery, which is how Joseph ended up in Egypt in the first place. While Joseph was enslaved in the home of Potiphar, he was falsely accused and thrown in prison, but God was with

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him and gave him success even in the prison. He was even able to interpret dreams for two of Pharaoh's men. All Joseph asked was that the cupbearer would remember him and tell somebody about his innocence. But sadly the cupbearer forgot about Joseph, and he was stuck, alone in prison."

"But there's so much more to this story, so let's jump back into it.

*Open the Bible to Genesis 41:1 (NlrV) and read.*

*"When two full years had passed, Pharaoh had a dream. In his dream, he was standing by the Nile River.'*

"Okay first of all . . . TWO FULL YEARS? The cupbearer forgot about Joseph, and now two years have gone by! Okay, that's just wild. Secondly, I need someone to help me play the role of Pharaoh. I think it would help make this story come to life!

*Communicator chooses a volunteer and then dresses them as Pharaoh. Lay them on the ground on a pillow like they are sleeping.*

*Be interactive with the volunteers throughout. Make them move around stage, consider using hand gestures and movements, keep it moving and fun!*

"So Pharaoh has this dream.

*Open the Bible to Genesis 41:2 (NlrV) and read.*

*"Seven cows came up out of the river. They looked healthy and fat. They were eating some of the tall grass growing along the river.'*

*Communicator moves the picture of the healthy cows over the "sleeping" Pharaoh.*

*Open the Bible to Genesis 41:3 (NlrV) and read.*

*"After them, seven other cows came up out of the Nile. They looked ugly and skinny. They were standing beside the other cows on the riverbank.'*

*Communicator moves the picture of the scrawny cows over the "sleeping" Pharaoh.*

*Open the Bible to Genesis 41:4 (NlrV) and read.*

*"The ugly, skinny cows ate up the seven cows that looked healthy and fat. Then Pharaoh woke up.'*

*Communicator makes the scrawny cows "eat" up the other picture of the healthy cows.*

"Kind of a strange dream, right? So, these seven scrawny cows eat up these seven healthy cows. Then Pharaoh wakes up. But then, he falls asleep and has another dream, similar to the first. This time, though, it is about grain.

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"Then Pharaoh woke up again. *(Stand volunteer up)* He was quite bothered by the dreams that he had in the night. He called in all of his top wise men and interpreters in all of Egypt. None of them, however, could figure out what the two dreams meant.

"I got an idea.

*Communicator calls for the Host. Host enters quickly.*

*(Speaking vaguely to Host)* "Do you know what they mean?"

**HOST:** "Know what WHAT means?"

**COMMUNICATOR:** "Exactly. Thanks for your help."

**HOST:** "No problem!"

*Host exits.*

"See, like I said, nobody could figure out what the dreams meant. Well, all of this talk about dreams sparked a memory for the cupbearer . . . we need a cupbearer!

*Communicator grabs a volunteer and puts a cup in their hand, standing them next to Pharaoh.*

"He was standing next to Pharaoh and got the nerve to speak up.

*Open the Bible to Genesis 41:9 (NirV) and read.*

*"Now I remember that I've done something wrong!"*

"The cupbearer went on to tell Pharaoh about the time he was in prison and had a dream that bothered him. But in the prison, there was this young Hebrew who was able to tell him what the dream meant and everything he said came true. Of course, the person he was talking about was Joseph!

*Open the Bible to Genesis 41:14 (NirV) and read.*

*"So Pharaoh sent for Joseph. He was quickly brought out of the prison. Joseph shaved and changed his clothes. Then he came to Pharaoh."*

"And now we need a Joseph!

*Communicator selects a volunteer for Joseph and puts him in a simple robe.*

"Joseph was now standing before the most powerful man in all of Egypt, maybe the world! Joseph explained that it was really God who was the one who gives the meaning and that God would tell Pharaoh what his dream means. So Pharaoh told him both dreams—fat cows being eaten by skinny cows and healthy heads of grain being eaten by withered heads of grain. Joseph spoke up.

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*Open the Bible to Genesis 41:25-27 (NirV) and read.*

*“Both of Pharaoh’s dreams have the same meaning. God has shown Pharaoh what he is about to do. The seven good cows are seven years. And the seven good heads of grain are seven years. Both dreams mean the same thing. The seven thin, ugly cows that came up later are seven years. So are the seven worthless heads of grain dried up by the east wind.”*

“Joseph went on to explain further. He told Pharaoh how the land of Egypt would have seven years with plenty of food—crops would grow, the harvest would be unlike anything they had seen. The seven good cows and good grains were seven years of plenty. That was good news for Pharaoh.

“But then Joseph went on to speak of seven bad years. Seven years of famine that would make people forget the seven good years. There would be terrible hunger throughout the entire land. The seven skinny cows and the seven withered grains were seven years of famine.

“So seven years of plenty followed by seven years of famine. What was Pharaoh supposed to do with this? How could he stop what God had already decided would happen? Joseph went on . . .

*Open the Bible to Genesis 41:33 (NirV) and read.*

*“So Pharaoh should look for a wise and understanding man. He should put him in charge of the land of Egypt.”*

“Joseph went on to tell Pharaoh how he needs to use the seven years of plenty to prepare for the seven years of famine. Start stockpiling grain so that when the famine comes, Egypt will be ready.

“Want to know Pharaoh’s response? Remember, Pharaoh is very powerful. If he doesn’t like what he hears, even if it is true, he may easily throw Joseph back in prison, or worse!

*Open the Bible to Genesis 41:39-40 (NirV) and read.*

*“Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “God has made all this known to you. No one is as wise and understanding as you are. You will be in charge of my palace. All my people must obey your orders. I will be greater than you only because I’m the one who sits on the throne.”*

*Communicator switches Joseph’s simple robe for a fancy royal robe.*

“Joseph went from the prison to the palace all in a day! He was number two in all of Egypt! I’m sure he was probably very relieved to hear Pharaoh’s response. Must have been quite a lot of pressure standing before Pharaoh like that. But because Joseph was willing trust God and share what God wanted Pharaoh to know, many people would eventually be saved from the famine, which leads to the next part of the story.

“Well, just like Pharaoh’s dream showed, they certainly did enjoy seven years of abundance. The harvests were amazing, but with Joseph there, they were careful to not waste anything. Instead, they followed his plan to stockpile grain in the storehouses.

*Communicator hands Joseph several bags of grain. Instructs him to pile them on the stage.*

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"And at the end of the seven years, just as predicted, a terrible famine ripped through the land of Egypt. In fact, the famine was terrible everywhere, including Canaan. Now, think back. Can anyone remember what was so important about Canaan? That was where Joseph's family lived, his father Jacob and his brothers.

"Jacob said to his sons,

*Open the Bible to Genesis 42:2 (NirV) and read.*

*"I've heard there's grain in Egypt. Go down there. Buy some for us. Then we'll live and not die."*

"Everybody was out of grain except Egypt! Jacob got word that SOMEHOW, Egypt had been prepared for the famine and still had grain. So Jacob sent all of Joseph's brothers except Benjamin down to Egypt.

"Let's get a couple volunteers to represent this big family of brothers headed to Egypt . . ."

*Communicator chooses a few volunteers. Use stage left and right to help represent traveling. Put Joseph with his grain on one side and have the brothers come from the other side.*

"Now, because Joseph was in charge of the grain, he was also the one who sold it to the people. So, of all of the people for the brothers to get grain from, they have to talk to Joseph!

*Open the Bible to Genesis 42:6b (NirV) and read.*

*"When Joseph's brothers arrived, they bowed down to him with their faces to the ground."*

*Help volunteers bow down*

"Anybody see anything interesting about that?"

*Allow for responses*

"Yes! The dream that Joseph had where the bundles of grain were bowing down! It came true! Now, you might be thinking that Joseph's brothers would recognize him, but remember, though—it has been years, and they probably don't even think he is alive anymore. Plus, Joseph probably looked very Egyptian by now. So Joseph recognized his brothers, but they didn't recognize him . . . and he was not going to make this easy on them. Like we said—classic little brother.

*Open the Bible to Genesis 42:9b-11 (NirV) and read.*

*"So Joseph said to them, 'You are spies! You have come to see the places where our land isn't guarded very well.' 'No, sir,' they answered. 'We've come to buy food. All of us are the sons of one man. We're honest men. We aren't spies.'"*

"Joseph was not letting them off the hook. Instead, Joseph put them to the test.

*Open the Bible to Genesis 42:15a (NirV) and read.*



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*"So I'm going to test you. And here's the test. You can be sure that you won't leave this place unless your youngest brother comes here."*

Joseph proposed that they go back home and return with their brother Benjamin, which is the one thing Jacob, the dad, said he would not let happen. Now THIS is a test!

"After three days, Joseph laid out a new plan.

*Open the Bible to Genesis 42:19-20b (NirV) and read.*

*"If you are honest men, let one of your brothers stay here in prison. The rest of you may go and take grain back to your hungry families. But you must bring your youngest brother to me. That will prove that your words are true."*

"So all of the brothers loaded up with grain (*hand them a grain bag*), while Simeon was thrown into prison (*leave one brother behind*).

"Upon returning home, the brothers told their father about everything that happened in Egypt. Jacob was very upset, but pretty soon the grain ran out again and there was no other choice—either he would have to take a chance and send Benjamin or his entire family would die because of the famine.

"Jacob still did not want to send him, but the brothers assured him that they would protect him and guard him with their life—something they never did for Joseph.

"The brothers in Canaan made the long journey back to Egypt, including Benjamin (*recruit a new volunteer*). Once again, they stood before Joseph, but they still didn't know he was their brother. When Joseph his youngest brother Benjamin, he was deeply moved and had to leave the room to hide his tears.

"Even though all of the brothers were back together again, Joseph wasn't quite finished. He had one more test. He loaded up more grain for the brothers to send them on their way (*pick up grain bags*), but first, he had one of his men put a valuable silver cup in Benjamin's grain bag without him knowing it (*very obviously put the silver cup in Benjamin's bag while he is holding it*).

"Yes, Joseph set them up! As soon as they left Egypt, Joseph sent some of his men to track them down and bring them back. Joseph accused them of stealing from him. Of course even Joseph knew the Benjamin was innocent, but the brothers promised Joseph they'd be enslaved to him if they let Benjamin go home to their father!

"So one by one, the grain bags were opened, and sure enough, when they got to Benjamin's, there was the silver cup that Joseph's men had planted! (*Find and hold up the silver cup*)

"Judah spoke up,

*Open the Bible to Genesis 44:32-33 (NirV) and read.*

*"I promised my father I would keep the boy safe. I said, 'Father, I'll bring him back to you. If I don't, you can put the blame on me for the rest of my life.'" "Now then, please let me stay here. Let me be your slave in place of the boy. Let the boy return with his brothers."*

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"Did you catch that? Judah offered to stand in the place of Benjamin, and the rest of the brothers seemed to agree—they were willing to do anything to protect Benjamin. Surely they had to be thinking this was IT!

"Finally, Joseph couldn't take it anymore.

*Open the Bible to Genesis 45:1 (NirV) and read.*

*"Joseph couldn't control himself anymore in front of all his attendants. He cried out, "Have everyone leave me!" So there wasn't anyone with Joseph when he told his brothers who he was.'*

"Joseph looked at his brothers and said 'It's me . . . Joseph!' Now what do you think the brothers said next? Well, actually . . . they couldn't say a thing. Check this out.

*Open the Bible to Genesis 45:3b (NirV) and read.*

*"But his brothers weren't able to answer him. They were too afraid of him.'*

"I guess if we did those things to our brother, we'd be scared, too, though. But Joseph went on to forgive his brothers. He told them that what they meant for evil God had used for good. God had used Joseph to save many lives here in Egypt and around the world—including theirs.

"Joseph threw his arms around his brothers and hugged them . . . (to volunteers – 'High fives are fine') I'm sure they didn't see that coming. And then he gave them instructions to get Jacob and all of their families and move down to be together in Egypt. And that's what the brothers did.

"A pretty powerful ending, right? I'm always amazed at Joseph's response to his brothers. Just imagine if we had gone through everything that Joseph had. We might want revenge. We might want to be bitter and mean. But Joseph understood that even though he had gone through a lot of pain, God had a bigger plan in mind. God was able to take circumstances that seemed really bad at the time and use them for good. And as a result, many people were saved. It may have been hard at times, but Joseph learned what it meant to trust God no matter what.

**SLIDE: GOD'S BIG STORY TIMELINE**

**SLIDE: WEEK 2 TIMELINE IMAGE**

*If you're making a timeline of printed images on your wall, take this moment to place today's timeline image on the clothesline.*

"Hey, give it up for our volunteers!"

*Volunteers return to their seats.*

## APPLICATION

**COMMUNICATOR:** "You know, we don't always think about the brothers' perspective in this story. We often, and rightly so, focus on Joseph. But just for a moment, think about those brothers. Things certainly must have felt like they were spiraling out of control. There was definitely a point where it looked like they were not getting out of the huge mess they were in. When they were standing before Joseph, well, it looked like it was over. But then, all of the

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sudden, they experienced incredible grace and forgiveness from Joseph, everything ended up being turned around. They were rescued and brought into the safety of Joseph's household. God was writing a bigger story than any of them could have even imagined.

"There's something really important for us to remember. When we're in the middle of a really difficult situation, it can feel like that what we're experiencing is just always how it's ever going to be. Or we might think there is no chance of a good ending. But we follow a God who specializes in taking pretty tough situations and finding a way to turn them around. God even turned Jesus' death into Jesus' resurrection. This doesn't mean that every situation will always have a happy ending, but when we believe that God is telling a bigger story with our lives, we can have hope that God sees it all more clearly than we can."

## LANDING

**COMMUNICATOR:** "As you go to your small groups today, think about this:

### SLIDE: KEY QUESTION

**"When has something turned out better than you expected?"** When were you convinced the ending was going to be a tragedy but God was able to do something different with your story? How can remembering this help you with what you're experiencing right now? If you're not sure how to answer those questions, don't worry. You'll talk more about it with your small group. Before we head out, let's pray and thank God for being trustworthy in the past and ask God to give us strength to show grit with what we're experiencing right now. Let's pray.

*Dismiss students to their small groups.*

**AUDIO: PLAY HIGH-ENERGY MUSIC AS THE KIDS EXIT.**

**SLIDE: THEME**

**OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME LOOP**